2: Bernardi E, M-4 (no date) 1955 FL12 Masai FL12

warriorhood". He also states that *Unoto* "is probably the best known and most misconstrued ceremony in the Masai age-grade system".

Unoto is not performed at a single place for whole Masailand, but in every territorial section or group of sections. [89] It consists of three main stage: (a) a testing of the candidates by the elders; (b) the election of the ceremonial leader of the unit; (c) a sacrifice of a bull.

a) The first stage takes place in a special hut called *singira*. [91] Not all the candidates, i. e., junior initiates, are allowed into the *singira*, but only those who have kept the sexual regulations which bind junior initiates. In order that no one may enter the *singira* under false pretences the entrance is bewitched by the elders. According to LEAKEY, [92] another test is performed insidie the hut aiming at detecting those who have entered surreptitiously.

In the annual report of the *NAD*, [93] we read that every candidate is expected to give "an account" of his past life. "The importance of the *E-Unoto*" states the same report, "lies in the fact that it imposes an obligation upon a warrior who has disgraced himself in any way to clear himself of the stigma before he can marry and settle down as a respected Elder of the tribe". "The *O-Singira*" says FOX, [94] "gives the warriors permission to have sexual relations with initiated women".

b) The nomination of the ceremonial leader (*ol aunoni*, pl. *il aunok*, or *ol otuno*) takes place inside the *singira* hut. The elders

[89] LEAKEY's statement, p. 194, that at the *Unoto* "all the members of a given group (i. e., age-unit) from the whole of the Masai country, north, south, east and west are required to be present" is emphatically denied by FOX, p. 451, and FOSBROOKE, p. 29. According to FOX the following sections perform it: (a) Purko; (b) Loita and Siria; (c) Damat; (d) Kuputiei, Lodokilani and Matapatu; (e) Laitokitok; (f) Kisongo. And FOSBROOKE says that the *Unoto* is celebrated "by sections or groups of sections" and is attended by as many warriors as possibile, "but by no means all". SANDFORD, on HEMSTED's authority, recorded that the *Unoto* was held by the Purko, Kakonyuke, Dalalekutuk and Damat on the Kinangop. The Sigirari, Matapatu, Kaputiei and other divisions where it suited them best.

[91] There are contradictory descriptions of the *singira*. MERKER states that it is a 'very big hut'; BAGGE says "not so big"; HOLLIS "small". Leakey and Fox state respectively "an enormous", and a "very large" hut. Probably it all depends on the actual number of the initiates involved.

[92] LEAKEY, *l. c.*, p. 195.

[93] *NAD*, p. 21.

[94] FOX, *l. c.*, p. 452.

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
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When the time for the ceremony arrives, a very big village is built called *sumubu*, and all the members of that age-grade which is to be transferred from the Junior to the Senior Warriorhood stage assemble here with their friends and relations. The warriors concerned all dress up in their very best finery, and lion skins especially are in great demand; and for nine days they dance a special dance called *Kaibach el moran*. During the whole nine days of dancing a very great number of cattle are slaughtered, and there is great feasting and beer-drinking, but neither the dancing nor the feasting are the important part of the ceremony; they are merely incidentals, centred around the *thingira*.

The Thingira.—Away from the main village an enormous hut has been built which will accommodate anything up to four hundred men at a time. It is said to be round in plan, to have a pointed roof, and to take very many days to build. There are no partitions inside it, but in the centre is dug a circular pit. Outside the hut is a thorn fence with only one entrance. This hut is called *thingira* (a word which has been borrowed by the neighbouring Kikuyu and applied to ordinary bachelor huts), and is the centre of the whole of the *Eunutu* ceremony. During the whole of the nine days of the ceremony this *thingira* is used as a "club-house" by the men of the age-group concerned with the ceremony, but there are certain restrictions, and it is these restrictions which give the key to the meaning of the whole ceremony. It is considered both ignoble and dishonourable for any man in the warrior groups—and more especially the junior warrior groups—to have any sexual relations with any but the uninitiated girls, but, of course, cases do occur either openly (*see* Forced Marriage) or in private. Now all members of the age-group concerned must be present at the *Eunutu* ceremony, but only those who have strictly observed the above regulation and have never had sexual relations with an initiated girl or married woman may enter the *thingira*. In order that no one may do so under false pretences the entrance to the *thingira* is bewitched by the elders, so that if anyone ineligible enters he will surely die.

The *thingira* is not big enough for all the warriors concerned to use it simultaneously, and each day for the nine days there is a public ceremony when the various individual territorial groups are expected to enter. For this ceremony all the friends and relations of those who are expected to enter collect round the entrance and each individual as he enters is greeted with applause, as he has shown by entering that he has not dishonoured himself or his family. Those warriors who dare not enter try to slink away unobserved, for they are disgraced. Inside the hut—as mentioned—is a large hole which is used as a cesspool, into which the men who enter the hut must urinate. This cesspool is also bewitched as an extra precaution, and anyone who has falsely entered and evaded the witchcraft of the entrance will certainly die upon urinating in the hole. All those who enter the *thingira* on any given day during the ceremony sleep there that night, and also have milk and meat brought them for food, and sit and talk for hours. During

11: Leakey E-5 (no date) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
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561 the nine days the elders in charge of the ceremony go about looking out for two
346 warriors from the group noted for their humility and honesty, and having selected them they keep their names very quiet, as the position for which they are being chosen is not at all sought after. In fact, as soon as the selection has been made, the relations of the two men chosen are heavily bribed in order that they shall allow them to be appointed.

561 *Shaving Ceremony.*—On the tenth day of the ceremony the heads of all the
624 warriors of the age-group are shaved, and during the shaving the elders come and point out the two warriors whom they have chosen, and publicly proclaim them as the
[302] heads of the group during its time in the senior warrior stage. These two men are called respectively *olutunot* and *oloboruengene*, and there are certain very strict regulations and restrictions attached to their position, the breaking of which would result in punishment by death; hence the unwillingness of the warriors to be chosen for these appointments, and the bribing of their relations. Unfortunately, no information about the duties of these two, or of the restrictions which they must observe under penalty of death, could be obtained from my informants. After
561 the shaving ceremony is over and these two have been appointed, the warriors go back to their normal life; but before doing so they first go all together for a few nights to a new village built for the purpose called *ngang'ongarithi*, and from there
[361] they scatter to their own districts. They may not, however, return to their old *manyattas*, which they vacated when they came to the *Eunutu* ceremony, but must build new *manyattas*.

Becoming Elders.—The length of time spent in the senior warrior class depends entirely upon whether a man belongs to an age-group called *jangienobur* or *murategedienye* (*see* the Age-group system). Transfer from the senior warrior stage to the Elders' stage takes place as a group transfer, but one age-group cannot transfer alone, but always two groups, a *jangienobur* and a *murategedienye*, must transfer together. No transfer, therefore, can take place until there are two age-groups in the warrior stage who have gone through the *Eunutu* ceremony. Once there are two such groups in the senior stage the actual time of transfer is dictated by whether or not there is a new age-group waiting in the novice stage ready to move up into the junior warrior stage, for as stated above (*see* the Age-group system), there may never be more than three age-groups in the warrior stage at one time. Equally no two warrior groups may move out into the Elders' stage until there is a new age-group in the novice stage, as otherwise it would mean leaving a single age-group alone in the warrior stage for too long, and this would be a serious thing when only the warrior groups are the fighting forces of the tribe. The actual transfer from the
[591] senior warrior stage to the Elders' stage takes place without any ceremonial, and the men just leave their *manyattas* and go and live with their wives, with whom as yet they have never lived, although the wives may be mothers with several children (*see* Marriage).

12: Fox G-5 (1925-1930) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

561 884 The *Loita* and *Siria E-Unoto* ceremony took place in July, 1929, and lasted three days. They invited me to it, but, owing to pressure of political work, I was unable to arrive till the morning of the third day at about 10 a.m. (Pl. XIII, Figs. 1-3, and Pl. XIV, Figs. 1 and 2).

The Masai definition of the *E-Unoto* is as follows :—

"The *E-Unoto* is a religious ceremony of blessing of the age-group, after which the warriors have leave to marry.

"The *O-Singira* gives the warriors permission to have sexual relations with initiated women."

The warriors were dancing at the time (Pl. XIII, Figs. 1 and 2). After about an hour they went off to a spot about a mile away in the forest, where I was [189] informed that they sacrificed a bullock as a charm.[1] They returned about 3.30 p.m., [187] about twenty of them being dressed in a manner similar to that of the three functionaries (Pl. XIII, Fig. 3). They danced round the *O-Singira* hut, and those warriors who were entitled to enter it led their families up to smear some cow-dung on it. The warriors then squatted down in a close group in the centre of the *manyatta*, while some elders walked round them drinking honey wine and spraying it out of their mouths over the group as a blessing. Others of the elders sat by the *O-Singira* hut and refreshed themselves with honey wine. It was at this point of the proceedings that the age-group of warriors was named *Irimirim* (from verb *arim*, pierce). This terminated the festival.

561 884 624 The chief functionary is the *Ol-Otuno*, but I cannot say what part he takes, having arrived so near the end of the ceremony. He is held in great reverence for ever afterwards, and it is unlucky for the age-group if a mishap befalls him. He must not take part in political affairs. He is always spoken of as *Ol-Otuno*, and his son, when he grows up, is known as the son of *Ol-Otuno*. (Pl. XIII, Fig. 3.)

There is a minor official called *Ol-Oiber engâne*. *Eng-âne* is a thong of leather. If my spelling of the first part of the title is correct it would perhaps mean "He who splits the thong." But there are several words from which it might derive, and I have no knowledge of his duties to assist me in checking my spelling of the name.

561 346 [361] [237] *O-Singira* (*Thingira*).—Being ignorant of Kikuyu I had been puzzled by this word prior to reading Mr. Leakey's article. At the *Loita E-Unoto* it was built just within the eastern edge of the village. The village consisted of a circle of huts about 300 yards in diameter. I looked in to the *O-Singira*, but it was too dark to see anything. It was made of cow-dung plaster like an ordinary hut, but was much bigger. Ranged against the wall outside were the heads of numerous oxen which the warriors had slaughtered.

561 884 I was informed that 109 of the warriors had not had sexual relations with initiated women and could therefore enter the *O-Singira*. After the *E-Unoto* the

[1] Masai, *Endalingoi*, the general word for a charm.

16:Hamilton U-5 (1959) 1963
FL12 Masai FL12
Loita
[P.107-A]

561 **The 'E-Unoto' Ceremony of the Masai.** *By Lord Cland Hamilton. With three text figures*

135 The cycle of ceremonies connected with the forming of a Masai age set starts with that known as *em-polosata*, performed by the members of the age set immediately senior to the existing warrior set. These members are destined to become the instructors in tribal lore of the youths who are about to comprise the new age set. *Em-polosata* is followed by *en-dungore* which marks the end of the current circumcision. These two [535] ceremonies are followed by a four-day dance of the initiates-to-be called *en-kipaata*; and the circumcision of the new age set is carried out over the next three to four years, the youths being 14–17 years of age. Each generation is divided into Right Hand and Left Hand circumcisions; the latter begin their ceremonies about six to seven years after the former, but both cease to be warriors at the same time.

Seven years after the beginning of their circumcision, the members of the Right Hand Circumcision become senior warriors through the *e-unoto*. This ceremony, which is part of the age-set institutions, is held about every seven years, when an age set of junior *muran* (warriors) feels that it is sufficiently strong and mature to graduate into senior *muran*, and so 'push' the next senior warriors of the previous age set up into adult manhood. The word *e-unoto* is derived from the verb *a-un*, to plant upright or set up (*i.e.* a new age set of senior warriors is 'set up') and, as will be seen below, certain things are ceremonially 'set up' in the *manyata* (warriors' kraal) where the ceremony is held.

Tribal elders choose a site for the ceremony, and there the *muran* who are to take part, aided by their mothers and girl [342] friends, build a new kraal. Each young man has his own hut, a [361] long, low building of withies, mud and cow dung. These are built in a circle, facing inwards. At night branches are pulled into the gaps between the huts to keep out wild beasts which might prey on the cattle sleeping in the arena encircled by the huts.

Besides choosing the site, the elders also select 49 *muran* from those about to take part in the ceremony. These 49 'pure ones' as they are called must be young men of good character, 100 per cent. full-blooded Masai and without physical blemish. Their leader, the *Ol-Otumo*, is chosen secretly and is not told of his appointment until the ceremony is due to start. Every *murani* dreads being called upon to fill the position for the *Ol-Otumo* is [783] regarded as a scapegoat for the misdeeds of his fellows. They believe that if he dies young as a sacrifice for their sins, they will live long and prosper.

[346] After the other huts have been built, the mothers of the 49 'pure ones' build the sacred hut called *O-Singira*. This is a round building, also made of branches, mud and cow dung, topped with a conical roof of the same materials. Around its base is laid a circle [339] of bullocks' skulls on which are left the horns and a strip of skin running down the face. Inside, in the centre of the *O-Singira*, the *Ol-Otumo* 'sets up' a stick of the wild olive tree (*Olea chrysophylla*) and so receives his name which means 'He-who-set-it-up.' The doorway of the *O-Singira* faces that of the *Ol-Otumo*'s hut, next to which is that of his assistant known as 'The Cutter-up of the Hide.'

The *e-unoto* of the Loita division of the Masai was held on 10–13 June, 1959, at Entasekera in southern Kenya. The youths taking part were of the right-hand circumcision, the members of which are known as *Il-Deregeyani*.

561 The ceremony lasts for four days, and the first of these is called
535 'The Day of the Red Dance.' As dawn breaks, all the people assemble outside their huts facing east. Four elders chant a prayer

16:Hamilton U-5 (1959) 1963
[P. 108-B] FL12 Masai FL12
Loita

bark of certain trees, a relic of the old cattle-raiding days, for when the fit has passed the sufferer loses all fear and is ready for battle. An unusual feature of the drug is that, once in a man's system, its effects last for life, and, given sufficient excitement, the man is liable to fits for the rest of his days.

The second day of *e-unoto* is called 'The Day of the White Dance.' Soon after sunrise the *murran* went off into the bush to

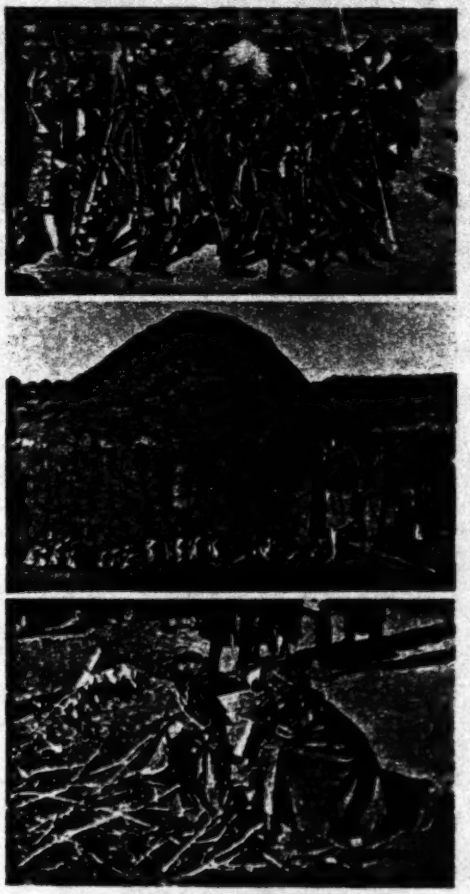

FIG. 3. E-UNOTO CEREMONIAL

Above, some of the 49 'Pure Ones' dancing with their comrades; middle, the Ol-Oturno, *who is the first to be shaved, and who wears white diatomite on face and legs, leads his family round the* O-Singira; *below, a mother shaving her son's eyebrows as he sits on the beaded circumcision hide.*

paint their bodies with diatomite. This white, chalklike substance is brought on foot from the Eburru Mountains near Naivasha in The Rift Valley. To bring it, two senior *murran* of good character are chosen, and they go off dressed in women's clothing and ornaments, carrying bamboo staves and cattle-branding tools as a sign that they are on a peaceful errand. Nearing the destination they stalk the diatomite as if it were game. Then they give the